Please amend claims 1-7, 9-11, 15-17, 21, 23-25, 27-28, 30-32, 34-35, 37-39, and 41-42. A copy of all claims now pending follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method for handling database requests for client systems over a network, the method comprising:

receiving <u>at the master control module</u> from ~~a client a database request via~~ a request handler <u>a database request of a client</u>;

determining <u>by the master control module</u> an assigned database server for handling the database request from a group of available database servers;

prompting <u>by the master control module</u> the assigned database server to load a database corresponding to the database request;

providing <u>by the master control module</u> information regarding the assigned database server to the request handler ~~to allow~~ <u>for</u> the request handler to <u>directly</u> provide the database request to the assigned database server for handling the database request.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein determining <u>by the master control module</u> the assigned database server for handling the database request from the group of available database servers further comprises:

determining that the database request is a request to create a database;

generating a database identifier for the database; and

mapping the database to the assigned database server using the database identifier.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

receiving <u>by the master control module</u> a subsequent database request containing the database identifier;

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using by the master control module the database identifier to determine the assigned

database server; and

providing by the master control module the subsequent database request to the assigned

database server for handling the subsequent database request.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein determining by the master

control module the assigned database server for handling the database request from the group

of available database servers further comprises:

responsive to determining that there is no database server assigned to handle the

database request[[;]]ι

assigning a selected database server from the group of available database servers as the

assigned database server; and

updating a mapping of previously created databases to their respective database servers

to include the assignment of the selected database server to the database.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

responsive to a failure in the handling of the database request by the assigned database

server[[;]]ι

assigning by the master control module the database request to an alternative database

server selected from the group of available database servers; and

providing by the master control module the database request to the alternative database

server for handling the database request.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

responsive to an elapsed time for the handling of the database request by the assigned

database server exceeding a threshold[[;]]ι

instructing by the master control module the assigned database server to terminate the

handling of the database request;

assigning by the master control module the database request to an alternative database server selected from the group of available database servers; and

providing by the master control module the database request to the alternative database server for handling the database request.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

maintaining location information for a plurality of request making clients corresponding to a particular database associated with the database request;

assigning by the master control module the database request to an alternative database server selected from the group of available database servers by analyzing the location information for the plurality of request making clients; and

providing by the master control module the database request to the alternative database server for handling the database request.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the alternative database server is assigned based upon a determination that a substantial number of the request making clients are located closer to the alternative database server than the assigned database server.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

assigning by the master control module the database request to an alternative database server selected from the group of available database servers, based upon a comparison of a first expected load on the assigned database server and a second expected load on the alternative database server.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

assigning by the master control module the database request to an alternative database server selected from the group of available database servers; and

providing <u>by the master control module</u> the database request to the alternative database server for handling the database request.

11. (Currently Amended) A system for handling database requests for client systems over a network, the system comprising:

a request handling module, ~~which receives~~ <u>for receiving</u> from a client a database request;

a plurality of database servers, ~~which receive and handle~~ <u>for receiving and handling</u> database requests; and

a master control module, in <u>direct</u> communication with the request handling module and the plurality of database servers, ~~which receives~~ <u>for receiving</u> the database request <u>from the request handling module,</u> ~~determines~~ <u>determining</u> an assigned database server from the plurality of database servers for handling the database request, ~~prompts~~ <u>prompting</u> the assigned database server to load a database corresponding to the database request, and ~~provides~~ <u>providing</u> information regarding the assigned database server to the request handling module ~~to allow~~ <u>for</u> the request handling module to <u>directly</u> provide the database request to the assigned database server.

12. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11, wherein the master control module determines the assigned database server from the plurality of database servers by determining that the database request is a request to create a database, generating a database identifier for the database, and mapping the database to the assigned database server using the database identifier.

13. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the master control module receives a subsequent database request containing the database identifier, uses the database identifier to

determine the assigned database server, and provides the subsequent database request to the assigned database server for handling the subsequent database request.

14. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11, wherein the master control module determines the assigned database server from the plurality of database servers by determining that there is no database server assigned to handle the database request, assigning a selected database server from the plurality of database servers as the assigned database server, and updating a mapping of previously created databases to their respective database servers to include the assignment of the selected database server to the database.

15. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 11, wherein the master control module responds to a failure in handling the database request by the assigned database server by assigning the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers, and identifying the alternative database server to the request handling module handler responsive to the database request.

16. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 11, wherein the master control module assigns the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers, and identifies the alternative database server to the request handling module handler responsive to the database request.

17. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 11, wherein the request handling module handler responds to an elapsed time for handling the database request by the assigned database server exceeding a threshold by instructing the assigned database server to terminate the handling of the database request, and wherein the master control module then assigns the

database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers.

18. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein the master control module maintains location information for a plurality of request making clients corresponding to a particular database associated with the database request, and assigns the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers by analyzing the location information for the plurality of request making clients.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the alternative database server is assigned based upon a determination that a substantial number of the request making clients are located closer to the alternative database server than the assigned database server.

20. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein the master control module assigns the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers, based upon a comparison of a first expected load on the assigned database server and a second expected load on the alternative database server.

21. (Currently Amended) A method for handling database requests for client systems over a network, the method comprising:

communicating by the master control module directly with a plurality of database

servers that receive and handle database requests; , for prompting the database

servers to load assigning databases to the database servers, including an

assignment of the master control module assigning a previously existing

database to an assigned database server selected from the plurality of database

servers;

receiving <u>by the master control module</u> a set of information about a database request

from a request handler;

determining <u>by the master control module</u> from the set of information that the assigned

database server corresponds to the database request; and

sending <u>by the master control module</u> an identification of the assigned database server to

the request handler.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the set of information about the database request includes a database identifier for the previously existing database, and the database identifier is used to determine that the previously existing database corresponds to the assigned database server.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, wherein ~~determining the assigned database server for handling the database request from the group of available database servers~~ <u>assigning the databases to the database servers</u> further comprises:

responsive to determining that the previously existing database is not currently assigned

to a database server[[;]] <u>,</u>

assigning a selected database server from the plurality of database servers as the

assigned database server; and

updating a mapping that correlates previously created databases to their

respective database servers to include the assignment of the selected

database server to the <u>previously existing</u> database ~~identifier~~.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

assigning <u>by the master control module</u> the database request to an alternative database

server selected from the plurality of database servers[[,]] <u>;</u> and

identifying <u>by the master control module</u> the alternative database server to the request

handler.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

maintaining location information for a plurality of request making clients corresponding

to the previously existing database; and

assigning <u>by the master control module</u> the database request to an alternative database

server selected from the plurality of database servers by analyzing the location

information for the plurality of request making clients.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein the alternative database server is

assigned based upon a determination that a substantial number of the plurality of request

making clients are located closer to the alternative database server than the assigned database

server.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

assigning <u>by the master control module</u> the database request to an alternative database

server selected from the plurality of database servers, based upon a comparison

of a first expected load on the assigned database server and a second expected

load on the alternative database server.

28. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for handling database requests for client

systems over a network, the apparatus comprising:

a database server managing module, ~~for~~ communicating <u>directly</u> with a plurality of

database servers ~~that receive and handle database requests~~, <u>for prompting the</u>

<u>database servers to load</u> ~~assigning~~ databases ~~to the database servers, including~~

~~an assignment of~~ <u>the database server managing module assigning</u> a previously

existing database to an assigned database server selected from the plurality of

database servers[[,]] and determining that ~~an~~ the assigned database server

corresponds to a database request by examining a set of information about the

database request; and

a request handler communications module, for receiving the set of information about the

database request from [[a]] the request handler, and sending an identification of

the assigned database server to the request handler.

29. (Original) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the set of information about the

database request includes a database identifier for the previously existing database, and the

database identifier is used to determine that the previously existing database corresponds to the

assigned database server.

30. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the database server

managing module ~~determines the assigned database server from the plurality of database~~

~~servers~~ assigns the databases to the database servers by determining that the previously

existing database is not currently assigned to a database server, assigning a selected database

server from the plurality of database servers as the assigned database server, and updating a set

of database identifiers that correlate previously created databases to their respective database

servers to include the assignment of the selected database server to the previously existing

database ~~identifier~~.

31. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the database server

managing module assigns the database request to an alternative database server selected from

the plurality of database servers, and wherein the request handler communications module

identifies the alternative database server to the request handler.

32. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 28, further comprising:

a database assignment module, in communication with the database server managing

module, ~~which~~ for maintaining ~~maintains~~ location information for a plurality of

request making clients corresponding to a particular database, and assigning

~~assigns~~ the database request to an alternative database server selected from the

plurality of database servers by analyzing the location information for the

plurality of request making clients.

33. (Original) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein the alternative database server is

assigned based upon a determination that a substantial number of the request making clients

are located closer to the alternative database server than the assigned database server.

34. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 28, further comprising:

a database assignment module, in communication with the database server managing

module, ~~which assigns~~ for assigning the database request to an alternative database server

selected from the plurality of database servers, based upon a comparison of a first expected load

on the assigned database server and a second expected load on the alternative database server.

35. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for a master control module,

for handling database requests for client systems over a network, the computer program

product stored on a computer readable medium and adapted to perform operations

comprising:

communicating by the master control module directly with a plurality of database

servers ~~that receive and handle database requests;~~ , for prompting the database

servers to load ~~assigning~~ databases ~~to the database servers, including an~~

~~assignment of~~ the master control module assigning a previously existing

database to an assigned database server selected from the plurality of database

servers;

receiving <u>by the master control module</u> a set of information about a database request

from [[a]] <u>the</u> request handler;

determining <u>by the master control module</u> from the set of information that the assigned

database server corresponds to the database request; and

sending <u>by the master control module</u> an identification of the assigned database server

to the request handler.

36. (Original) The computer program product of claim 35, wherein the set of

information about the database request includes a database identifier for the previously existing

database, and the database identifier is used to determine that the previously existing database

corresponds to the assigned database server.

37. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 35, wherein

~~determining the assigned database server for handling the database request from the group of~~

~~available database servers~~ <u>assigning the databases to the database servers</u> further comprises:

responsive to determining that the previously existing database is not currently assigned

to a database server[[;]] <u>,</u>

assigning a selected database server from the plurality of database servers as the

assigned database server; and

updating a persistent set of database identifiers that correlate previously created

databases to their respective database servers to include the assignment of

the selected database server to the <u>previously existing</u> database ~~identifier~~.

38. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 35, wherein the

operations further comprise:

assigning <u>by the master control module</u> the database request to an alternative database

server selected from the plurality of database servers[[,]] ; and

identifying <u>by the master control module</u> the alternative database server to the request

handler.

39. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 35, wherein the

operations further comprise:

maintaining location information for a plurality of request making clients corresponding

to the previously existing database; and

assigning <u>by the master control module</u> the database request to an alternative database

server selected from the plurality of database servers by analyzing the location

information for the plurality of request making clients.

40. (Original) The computer program product of claim 39, wherein the alternative

database server is assigned based upon a determination that a substantial number of the

plurality of request making clients are located closer to the alternative database server than the

assigned database server.

41. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 35, wherein the

operations further comprise:

assigning <u>by the master control module</u> the database request to an alternative database

server selected from the plurality of database servers, based upon a comparison

of a first expected load on the assigned database server and a second expected

load on the alternative database server.

42. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 35, wherein the operations further comprise:

assigning <u>by the master control module</u> the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers based upon a failure in handling the database request by the assigned database server.